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ABSTRACT

A survey of secondary school English teachers employed by three school districts in Utah was conducted by the teacher education committee of the English department of Weber State College (Ogden) to determine the areas of English instruction for which their teacher education courses had not adequately prepared them. On a scale from one to five, the 72 respondents rated 36 areas of teacher education, including teaching methods, grammar and writing, literature, speech and drama. The resulting data indicated that teachers were undertrained in 13 areas--mostly concerned with writing--and overtrained in five areas, three of which dealt with literature. Based on these results, an optional curriculum was developed for students entering the English teaching program at Weber State. The new curriculum emphasized preparing teachers in the area of writing instruction and teaching methods, as well as literature instruction. (HTH)

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A SURVEY OF ENGLISH-EDUCATION CURRICULUM NEEDS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS

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A Survey of English-Education Curriculum Needs
for Secondary School English Teachers

This report is a problem-to-solution paper. As chairman of the English Department's Teacher Education Committee I learned that the college English curriculum did not fit the needs of the teachers recently trained in our school. From practicing teachers came such comments: "I did not have one class that gave me specific methods to use in the classroom. College needs to have classes that teach a teacher how to teach the skills they have learned to secondary level students." And, "Colleges are not doing enough to teach prospective English teachers how to teach English. Beginning teachers frequently have never read what two-thirds of their students will be reading. Most teachers have had no instruction in how to teach composition, spelling and vocabulary which is considered their greatest responsibility by the public." Further, a cooperating tenth grade teacher put the matter this way: "I find teachers trained in your school to be seriously lacking in most skills except literature."

With such condemning comments from our own community of teachers, I vowed that our department must produce a solution. And so we began to gather data. During 1978 a series of "town meetings" were held. Members of the College English Department's Teacher education committees met several times with the Weber, Ogden City, and Davis School District personnel to evaluate the present English-Teaching Major program. The meetings proved valuable in human relations, but few specific curriculum recommendations came from the discussions. We needed broader community input in order to make changes in the present program or to establish a new program designed especially for today's teachers.

As a follow-up from these meetings I developed a questionnaire describing

curriculum needs of the secondary school English teacher. The questionnaire was subsequently evaluated by members of the college English Department and the Assistant Superintendents from each school district. The questionnaire was then mailed to 254 secondary school English teachers employed within the three school districts: Davis 135 teachers; Weber 70 teachers; Ogden City 49 teachers. The response from the three school districts was 72 returned questionnaires or 29 percent.

Description of Population:

The 72 respondents are described as follows:

College degree: BS/BA 51 respondents

MS/MA 19 respondents

PhD/Ed 2 respondents

Certificated through which college or university:

Weber State College	19 respondents	(26 percent)
Brigham Young University	13 respondents	(18 percent)
Utah State University	12 respondents	(17 percent)
University of Utah	9 respondents	(13 percent)
Other	19 respondents	(26 percent)

Findings:

The statistical finding compiled from the 72 respondents was divided into two columns: ALL indicating the total number of respondents, and WSC indicating only the respondents certificated at Weber State College. The numerals used describe the maximun value (5)/minimum value (1) placed on the line items of the questionnaire. A Likert scale was used in the questionnaire to provide an adequate range of value for each item.

College class or college experience	Extent of training ALL	Extent of training WSC	Actual need in classroom ALL	Actual need in classroom WSC
1. Tutoring	1.7	2.1	2.9	3.2
2. Methods of teaching: English	2.9	2.7	4.3	4.7
3. Methods of Teaching: composition	2.2	1.9	4.5	4.7
4. Methods of Teaching: literature	3.0	2.4	4.0	4.3
5. Writing classroom objectives	3.5	3.5	2.9	2.6
6. Grammar: historical	2.3	1.9	2.0	2.1
7. Grammar: traditional	2.9	2.4	3.7	3.7
8. Grammar: transformational	3.3	1.9	1.7	1.6
9. Grammar: structural	2.8	2.3	2.5	2.6
10. Grammar: diagraming	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.2
11. Grammar: evaluating	2.2	1.7	2.8	2.4
12. Language: historical	2.7	2.3	2.3	2.2
13. Language: usage	2.9	2.6	4.3	4.2
14. Writing: pre-writing techniques	2.7	2.2	3.9	4.2
15. Writing: organization	2.7	3.7	4.2	4.7
16. Writing: syntax	2.6	2.4	3.3	3.3
17. Writing: semantics	2.4	2.3	3.1	3.0
18. Writing: spelling	2.3	2.9	4.2	4.8
19. Writing: punctuation	2.8	2.9	4.3	4.8
20. Writing: vocabulary	2.8	2.6	4.6	4.3
21. Writing: factual	3.9	3.0	4.2	4.0
22. Writing: imaginative	2.9	2.9	4.2	3.6
23. Writing: evaluating, grading	2.4	2.3	4.8	4.0
24. Literature: World	3.0	2.6	2.9	2.8
25. Literature: American	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.7
26. Literature: British	3.9	3.7	3.0	2.6
27. Literature: Minority, Ethnic	1.9	1.9	2.6	2.8

		Extent of training		Actual need in classroom	
28.	Literature: Classical	3.4	3.0	2.8	2.5
29.	Literature: Adolescent	2.4	1.9	3.8	4.1
30.	Literature: analysis	3.8	3.4	3.5	3.3
31.	Literature: evaluating	3.5	3.2	3.4	3.4
32.	Speech class	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.4
33.	Drama class	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.8
34.	Foreign language class	3.7	2.7	2.3	2.3
35.	Reading class	2.1	2.0	4.5	4.1
36.	Teacher/student conference	2.4	2.6	3.7	3.8

Summary of findings

The compilation of statistical data from the questionnaire suggests that of the thirty-six items cataloged, thirteen items represent areas of undertraining, five items represent areas of overtraining, and eighteen items represent an area of balance in training and need.

Thirteen Items of Undertraining:

Item		WSC	ALL
3	Methods of teaching composition	2.8	2.3
2	Methods of teaching English	2.6	1.4
29	Adolescent Literature	2.2	1.4
35	Reading	2.1	2.4
14	Prewriting techniques	2.0	2.2
4	Methods of teaching Literature	1.9	1.0
18	Writing: spelling	1.9	1.9
19	Writing: punctuation	1.9	1.5
20	Writing: vocabulary	1.7	1.8
23	Writing: evaluating, grading	1.7	2.4

13	Language: usage	1.6	1.4
7	Grammar: traditional	1.3	1.8
15	Writing: organization	1.0	1.5

Five areas of overtraining:

Item		WSC	ALL
26	British Literature	1.1	.9
5	Writing Classroom Objectives	.9	.6
28	Classical Literature	.5	.6
34	Foreign Language Classes	.4	1.4
8	Transformational Grammar	.3	1.6

Fortified by the input from the personal meetings with secondary school adminstrators and teachers and the data compiled from the questionnaire, the English Education Committee designed an optional curriculum--the English Composite Major--for students entering the English Teaching Program. The optional curriculum is as follows:

ENGLISH COMPOSITE MAJOR

A. A minimum of 66 credit hours is required.
B. No minor is required.
C. English courses required:

1. Grammar courses (6 credit hours): 323 (3), 324 (3).
2. Composition courses (9 credit hours): 321 (3), 325 (3), 326 (3), 327 (3), 328 (3).
3. Methods courses (9 credit hours): 329 (3), 380 (6).
4. Language courses (6 credit hours): 381 (3), 383 (3).
5. Literary Criticism and Young Peoples Literature (6 credit hours): 236 (3), 331 (3).
6. One Ethnic or World Literature Class: English 355 (3), 373 (3).
7. One Shakespeare Class: English 368 (5), 369 (5).
8. One Seminar in Eminent Writers: English 367 (3), 370 (3), 371 (2).
9. Two American Literature Classes: English 451 (3), 452 (3), 453 (3), 454 (3), 455 (3).
10. Two British Literature Classes: English 461 (5), 462 (5), 463 (5), 464 (5), 465 (5), 466 (5).
11. Public Speaking: Communications 102 (3).
12. Electives: English 225 (3), 235 (3), 275 (3), 323 (3), 324 (3), 326 (3), 327 (3), 330 (3), 335 (3), 336 (3), 337 (3), 350 (3), 358 (3), 360 (3), 372 (3), 374 (3), 380 (3), 382 (3), 388 (3), 475 (3), 483 (2-3-4-5), 492 (3).

This report has been a problem-to-solution paper. The problem has been clearly identified and a workable solution based upon pertinent date has been adopted.